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Lincoln's Urban Life Cycle

Observe over a long enough time span, and you'll realize cities are organic, living entities – a kind of urban garden that goes through the life cycles like every garden. Think of buildings as plants that come from seeds (ideas) that use water and sunlight (planning and money) to sprout. As a plant grows to maturity, blossoms, and produces fruit, so a building is completed and provides many years of productive use. And, yes, eventually a building is demolished – as a plant dies – to make room for new growth. Lincoln's urban garden has all the parts of that life cycle and Urban Development is involved in several.

Downtown, the oldest part of Lincoln's urban garden, has several prominent examples of this life cycle. The former Larson Furniture Building at 7th and R Streets was demolished in June. After some ground work, both figuratively and physically, developers Fernando Pages and Bob Hampton will construct **Option 13**, the first completely new downtown housing in many years. Option 13's two buildings will add 13 condominiums to the growing supply of downtown housing options.

This fall the **Douglas 3 movie theater building**, at 13th & P Streets, will be demolished. In its place, seeds of a **new Civic Square** will be planted, beginning with a design charrette (idea session) with downtown and area stakeholders. Using this and other input, a Master Plan will be developed for the **Civic Square**.

On 10th and O Streets, east of the Old Court House Building, an idea has blossomed and many new, real plants are growing, too. Although the public dedication of the **new Government Square Park** is not until October 6th, pedestrians can already stroll by the fountain (funded privately) and experience the rest of the park (funded through Tax Increment Funds).



Architectural drawing of Option 13 at 7th & R Streets



Government Square Park at 10th and O Streets



Conceptual drawing of HyVee development at 48th and O Streets

Between P and N Streets, at about 21st Street, several buildings are making way for better flood control – a very important concern in any garden! **Glenn's Body Shop**, **Trump Memorial**, **Williamson Automotive**, and **C&B Auto** have been or are being demolished to make way for the new **Antelope Valley Creek channel**. By removing the threat of floods, the new channel will strengthen future growth along the channel. Just watch what happens over the next twenty years! Yes, urban gardens take longer to develop than typical garden plots.

As work progresses on widening O Street, new buildings are sprouting in the 48th and O Street area. South of O Street, construction of the **Walgreens** has already begun. In fact, the store plans to open yet this year. As you read this, construction of the new **West Gate bank branch office** and the **Runza/Braeda restaurant** may have also already begun.

On the north side of O Street, a Re-development Agreement has been approved, but ground work is still being done – including environmental assessment, re-zoning, and establishment of a special assessment district. Demolition of the existing vacant auto dealership buildings should occur in early 2007, followed by construction of the

HyVee development.

Sometimes a garden plant just needs to be replaced with a new, hardier variety. In the Woods Park neighbor-

Continued on the next page...

FLAT IRON CROSSING

For many years the Missouri Pacific Railroad ran through the heart of Lincoln, carrying goods to and from industries that were located along the tracks. Today, those tracks have been replaced by the MoPac Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail which runs from north 30th (Peter Pan Park) to 84th Street and beyond.

Rising from a former industrial site located along the bike trail, Flat Iron Crossing is a unique new housing development. It features 34 townhomes with backyards that abut the north side of Peter Pan Park, between North 30th and 33rd Streets.

Eugene Carroll, the developer, has owned the land for over 10 years. His vision has always been to rezone the land from industrial to residential. Mr. Carroll worked closely with several

City departments, especially Parks and Recreation which controlled the old railroad land, to realize his vision. In 2004, the project was finally approved and the land rezoned to residential.

By locating these new townhomes in the heart of Lincoln, home buyers can qualify for special financing. There are many affordable housing programs for buyers, including NIFA programs with 3.67% interest rates. Down payment assistance is available through the First Home Program, which is administered by NeighborhoodWorks®Lin-

coln and funded through Urban Development.

The townhome design is both visually appealing and user-friendly. The \$136,900 starting price includes 3 bedrooms and 2 baths. The 1,480 square foot homes have a full basement, a deck overlooking the park and a two-car garage. The first two townhomes are now completed and ready for occupancy.

For more information about Flat Iron Crossing, please call Mr. Carroll at 420-0770.



Kitchen/dining area in new townhome



This side of the townhomes faces Peter Pan Park

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808 P Street, # 400, Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 441-7606 TDD (402) 441-7615
www.lincoln.ne.gov, keyword: urban

City of Lincoln: Coleen J. Seng - Mayor

Administration Division: Marc Wullschlegel - Director, Dallas McGee - Assistant Director, Ron Cane, Jeff Cole, Kristi Nydahl, Pat Posey Ribeiro

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AA/EEO

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hood, at 27th and Randolph Streets, **American Legion Park** is getting a new "variety" of playground equipment, picnic shelter, and landscaping. Improvements are financed through CDBG funds from Urban Development and implemented by Parks & Recreation. Keeping neighborhood parks vital in older parts of Lincoln is an ongoing objective for both of these City departments.

As a plant or tree matures, it can serve different purposes in a garden. Similarly, the old telephone building in the University Place neighborhood will be a **new police station** by the end of 2006. Preparation of the rest of this redevelopment parcel, between 48th and 49th Streets on Huntington Avenue, is continuing. This summer, site preparation will be completed with the demolition of a vacant house. The agreement is still being shaped for the new mixed-use office/retail building that will be



New Heartland Optical Facility at 27th and Apple Streets

built on the vacant parcel. Picture multiple gardeners discussing which plant species is just right for a location.

At North 27th and Apple Streets, the **new Heartland Optical facility** is completed and "blooming" with expanded retail optical services, as well as their contract business providing corporate clients with safety glasses. Being "planted" in the right place - near the People's Health Center - helped them grow. Just south of Heartland Optical, seeds for the new pedestrian overpass and bike-

way are "germinating" as **Schemmer Associates** and **RDG Planning & Design** complete the final design. Construction should begin in about a year and be completed in 2007.

As you watch your vegetable or flower garden grow this summer, remember to watch the urban garden around you, too. Enjoy all the existing buildings with their productive and successful uses. Notice the endings and beginnings of buildings and appreciate the vitality behind Lincoln's urban life cycle. Happy gardening!

WELL-TIMED WORDS

Brownfields Grant

In April, 2005, the City of Lincoln was awarded a Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct environmental assessment activities at the 48th & O Street redevelopment site. HWS Consulting Group was contracted by the City to coordinate these efforts. Assessment activities can include field research, interviews, record research and ground sampling/testing. Work has begun and is scheduled to conclude by August, 2007.

AV Tours Show Changes

In early June, the Antelope Valley partners offered free bus and bike tours of the project area. Almost 500 people took the opportunity to see the improvements and changes in the project area. The tour featured:

- ♦ Flood channel, both completed and future sections,
- ♦ Big X overpass under construction,
- ♦ New bridges at Military Road, Y Street and Vine Street
- ♦ Liberty Village housing development, and
- ♦ Fleming Fields recreational sports park.

To view the PowerPoint presentation used as part of the bus tour, go to the City's Web site – www.lincoln.ne.gov – and use the keyword

Antelope Valley. This takes you to the AV home page. Select *Pictures, Presentations, Videos* and then select *Antelope Valley Bus Tour '06'*.

New Latino Network

A new network of Latino Realtors® and bankers has formed with the help of Urban Development Department staff. The *Latino Network* will work to better serve the growing Latino community in Lincoln.

The Network will act as a support, resource and advisory group, with participants drawing upon their individual and collective knowledge and experiences. They will exchange information and develop contacts to aid Latinos in areas such as housing, financial literacy, using/understanding the banking industry and the acculturation processes.

Since their organizational meeting in September 2005, the Latino Network has met and covered several topics. Lincoln Action Program staff presented information on how to start and operate your own small business -- market planning, cash flow planning, operations planning, sound business concepts and solid financial projections, and where to go to access small business micro-loans.

The Network also learned about banking entities that offer mortgage loans using the Indi-

vidual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and the requirements of these loans.

By sharing ideas and by discussing pressing issues, the Latino Network can better serve the Latino community.

Hartley Focus Area

Hartley Focus Area activities are taking shape. Olsson Associates was hired to design a new streetscape for R Street. In April, they met with owners and residents to gather ideas and hear concerns. In May, a preliminary design was presented to the Hartley Neighborhood Association. Feedback generated at the presentation is being worked into the design and a final design will be presented later this summer. It will include ornamental lighting, special street treatment in front of Hartley Park, and traffic calming techniques. Construction will have to occur in phases, as funds become available.

Happily, funds are going to be available for some concentrated housing improvements along Kleckner Court and Walnut Court. Urban Development applied for and will be receiving funds from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for this concentrated area. The details and the contract are still being finalized, but both resident and non-resident house owners will be able to benefit -- and indirectly, so does the neighborhood!

SIDEWALK CAFES ABOUND

Maybe we are inherently drawn to outdoor dining. Could a millennia spent eating and drinking outside with clansmen watching the day wind down have imprinted in us all an innate desire for... sidewalk cafés?

Well, whatever the cause, over the last several years Lincoln's sidewalk dining scene has exploded. It started with a committed core of restaurants like Yia Yias, Crane River, and stalwart businesses along the Haymarket docks. Now, a new group of downtown cafés has emerged, offering a diverse range of outdoor options to hungry and thirsty Lincolinites, as well as ever welcome out-of-town visitors.

While there is no doubt that the smoking ban plays a role in this growth (sidewalk cafés are *not* covered by the ban), other forces are at work as well. Obviously, sidewalk cafés expand the available floor space for restaurants at minimal cost -- restaurants pay the City an annual rent for the use of the public space included in their café.

In addition, outdoor seating acts as advertising. Potential costumers who see people

using sidewalk cafés know that the establishment is open and enjoyable, with diverse seating options.

Most importantly, perhaps, is the immeasurable impact that cafés have on a business's hipness scale. For many years the Haymarket had Lincoln's "cool" dining and coffee drinking market cornered with its unique dock experience. That is no longer the case.

Recently, new sidewalk café construction has centered on the funky 14th and O Street area, with Ali Babas and Highnooners as the newest duo. They will soon be joined at the corner by the Gourmet Grill.

Numerically, the Scooters Coffee House chain has made the biggest splash in Lincoln's sidewalk café world, opening up two cafés in their downtown and Haymarket locations. Haymarket sidewalk café options continue to grow with the addition of outdoor dining at Doc's Place in the Apothecary Building.

Other downtown coffee shops are joining the trend, too. Starbuck's has reinstalled outdoor seating at 12th and P Streets and a proposed coffee house at 14th and Q Streets -- sched-



uled to open later this fall -- also plans to include outdoor seating.

Later this summer, the popular Blue Orchid Thai Restaurant in the historic Federal Place Building plans to open an outdoor dining area overlooking the new Government Square Park at 10th and O Streets.

With a plethora of outdoor cafés, all of downtown has emerged as an district that allows diners and drinkers to reconnect with that primordial urge to watch the world wind down over food and drink.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

City Budget Schedule

- August 1: Publication of Budget Summary in media, including City Council's proposed changes
- August 7: Public Hearing on proposed budget
- August 9: City Council votes on final changes to the Mayor's Recommended Budget
- August 21: City Council adopts Budget

QUARTERLY QUOTE

"Thank your staff please - for being so helpful and considerate for and to a first time person using your center."

--a client of the One Stop Career Center

ONE STOP YOUTH PROGRAM

The **Youth Program** is part of the services offered at the **One Stop Career Center** under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIA allows services that "engage youth in order to prepare them to enter the 21st century workforce." Services are especially for youth who are "disconnected" from the traditional school system and other related services. To be eligible, youth in the Lincoln service area need to be:

- ▶ Between the ages 16 and 21 years (*Technically, 14 and 15 year-olds can apply, but since they cannot legally be "out-of-school" and require a work permit, their participation is restricted.*)
- ▶ A resident of Lancaster or Saunders Counties

- ▶ Low-income (based on the Federal poverty guidelines)
- ▶ Eligible to work in the U.S.
- ▶ Registered with Selective Service (*males 18 years and older*)

Youth also need to demonstrate their need for the program or barriers to their employment, such as:

- ▶ Deficient in basic literacy skills
- ▶ School Dropout
- ▶ Pregnant or parenting
- ▶ Offender
- ▶ Homeless, runaway or foster child
- ▶ Additional locally-defined barriers, such as a documented disability

Shortages in the current labor market and future projections show that these "neediest" youth are even more important to the creation of a skilled, well-trained and demand-driven workforce.

Ideally, the **Youth Program** will be a catalyst that connects youth with quality secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities, get "at risk" youth back on track, and prepare them to be competitive in the labor market and other career opportunities, such as military service.

If you would like to refer someone to the One Stop Youth Program, or if you have questions about the program, contact Bethany at 441-4920 or Andrea at 441-4921.